

Portland Harbor Update
For Oregon Insider
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Judy Smith, EPA and Kim Cox, DEQ

During the last week of September, the Environmental Protection Agency finished negotiating an agreement with members of the Lower Willamette Group, a coalition of Portland Harbor businesses and public agencies who voluntarily stepped forward to participate in the investigation and cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

The agreement, a legal document called an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), establishes the details about conducting a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS), including how it will be prepared, who will perform the work and how EPA will recover costs incurred by the EPA and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in connection with the RI/FS. The AOC describes how the boundaries of the site will be determined, how EPA and DEQ will share responsibility for investigation and cleanup, and identifies the primary contaminants of concern. According to EPA Project Manager Wallace Reid, "This agreement is good for EPA, good for the businesses and good progress towards getting a plan in place for cleaning up Portland Harbor."

The AOC and an attached Statement of Work describes tasks to be performed between now and the end of April 2002. Documents and other information resulting from these tasks will be posted to the web so they are available for public review. Some of the major items to be delivered to EPA for their approval and review this winter and spring include a:

- Site Visit Report – *provides background about the Portland Harbor site and will document initial observations about the site by technical and project management staff and contractors.*
- Draft Risk Assessment Scoping Memo – *provides the initial approach to looking at the different ways humans and wildlife could be exposed to contamination. Exposure could be due to eating, breathing or coming in skin contact with hazardous substances. A risk assessment evaluates levels of contamination and determines potential risks to people and wildlife due to the contamination.*
- Round 1 Work Plan - *outlines how the investigation will proceed and ensures that enough information is gathered to determine how much contamination is present, what kinds of contamination are present and where the contamination is located. The work plan will change over time, as more data becomes available. The work plan includes other reports and studies such as data gaps analysis, criteria for development of alternatives and:*
 - Preliminary Remedial Action Objectives – *identifies objectives by which success will be measured, such as what uses might be restored or enabled by the cleanup*
 - Facility Siting Evaluation – *identifies potential sites for disposal of contaminated sediments, identifies sources of sediment capping materials, and outlines the process for evaluating the available choices.*
 - Early Action Criteria – *outlines the criteria that will be used to evaluate priority cleanup work needed prior to the completion of the RI/FS and selection of a final cleanup plan, in order to protect human health and the environment.*

You can see the full text of the AOC at the EPA website www.epa.gov/r10earth/. Click the index button and select P, and Portland Harbor. For more information on the Portland Harbor Superfund Site, contact Judy Smith, EPA at 206-553-6246 or Kim Cox DEQ at 503-229-6590.